

she has to do a background check on, she's got nothing to fear.

But I understand, there is that whole other culture out there of people who are law abiding; they pay their taxes; they show up for duty when we need them to fight for our country, to defend us, to do whatever else; and a lot of them just think that this is some big urban conspiracy to take their guns away. Well, it isn't. And we all need to be talking to each other. We need to quit this sort of—you know, trying to make this chapter 57 in the culture war for someone's political benefit.

So I say that to you—hey, if you ask me, yes, I hope we get—before I leave office, I will be very disappointed if we haven't reformed Social Security, committed ourselves to pay down the debt over the next 17 years, reform Medicare, pass my education and my environmental agenda. But the American people will get the rest right if we decide to do what it takes to be one America, if we decide to do

what it takes to reach out across all the lines that divide us and say, "You know, our common humanity is more important than our interesting differences."

And if we do that, then we will be able to lead the world to a better place and give our children the future they deserve. That's what I think my party represents. That's what I've worked for 6 years to bring to the American people. And when you leave here today, I hope that's why you believe that you came.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:15 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to luncheon hosts Irwin and Joan Jacobs; Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, and Beth Dozoretz, national finance chair, Democratic National Committee; Renee Mullins, daughter of murder victim James Byrd, Jr.; and Judy Shepard, mother of murder victim Matthew Shepard.

## Statement on National Crime Statistics May 16, 1999

Today the FBI released preliminary data showing that crime fell another 7 percent in 1998, with an 8 percent decline in murder and an 11 percent decline in robbery. Crime is now down for a remarkable seventh year in a row. More community police on our streets and fewer guns in the hands of criminals have helped make our communities the safest they have been in a generation.

But tragic events like the Littleton shooting remind us that our work is far from done. We

in Washington have a responsibility to support law enforcement officers and pass commonsense gun legislation. We should start by closing the gun show loophole that allows criminals and juveniles to buy guns at gun shows without so much as a background check. In this way, we can keep the crime rates coming down.

NOTE: This statement was embargoed for release until 6 p.m.

## Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Reception in Las Vegas, Nevada May 16, 1999

*The President.* Thank you very much. First, I would like to say to Elias and Jody, we're grateful to be here, and thank you for turning the Muzak off. [*Laughter*] And all the televisions—I couldn't compete with them. [*Laugh-*

*ter*] And I thank you for being my friend for so many years, when I was up and when I was down, and for being my mother's friend, something I will never forget, and for having me into your home for the second time.